

To Whom It May Concern:

Wyatt is my first cousin once removed, the son of my much younger cousin, Rachel, who died in 2015. I met Wyatt as a very young and rambunctious toddler, at a family event, but then never saw him again until his mom's funeral, when he was 16. Not until a few years later, at Thanksgiving in 2018, did I get the chance to know Wyatt much better.

I'd learned through the family grapevine of his heartbreaking challenges with how his family reacted to his "coming out," and of his understandable mental health issues and suicidal despair as a direct result of a mix of factors, including his mom's death, his rejection by his dad, and his difficulties at college. These were all familiar to me, as I also lost my mom in childhood, had major difficulties with my family due to their religious beliefs about my sexuality, and struggled with depression and suicidality. Having survived these traumas and eventually thrived, I felt a deep responsibility to reach out to Wyatt and offer my support and understanding.

He came to visit me and my partner for Thanksgiving in 2018, and we hit it off immediately. I enjoyed introducing him to a number of my friends who might also become part of a support network of healthy, happy queer folx and allies of all ages to help him feel less alone and adrift as he became increasingly cut off from his immediate family.

Since then, I have kept Wyatt under my wing as best I could across geographical distance, but it wasn't hard to tell he continued to feel disenfranchised and increasingly on his own to figure out how to survive in the adult world. While he is highly intelligent and gifted, I saw he was also still immature, impulsive, and lacking the judgment that doesn't typically come online until later, when the brain is fully developed in mid- to late 20s.

I too struggled with similar challenges for similar reasons, and so I've had a tremendous amount of patience and compassion for Wyatt's challenges. My heart aches that his immaturity and trauma history clearly contributed to his devastating trajectory.

It took me a long time to get to where I am as a certified peer specialist in the state of Kansas, but I can testify from direct lived experience that Wyatt has a tremendous amount of potential to contribute to this world, and I have no doubt whatsoever that he is learning from his time in prison, and has the potential to be a remarkable asset to society when he is released.

I see no particular value in a harsh and lengthy sentence. He has suffered enough to get the point! I would love to see him back outside and using his considerable talents to help others sidestep similar pitfalls.

Thank you for considering my point of view.

Marva Weigelt
insight peer support
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Newton, KS 67114
620-803-9097



Marva & Wyatt, Thanksgiving 2018
I gave him his great grandmother Pauline's apron

Dear District Judge Roseann Ketchmark,

My name is Chris Maxwell and my son, Wyatt C. Maxwell, will be standing before you next month for sentencing. He's the first-born of my late wife, Rachel Maxwell, and myself. I have been in his life since the day he was born on April 20th, 1999. He lived with his mother and I until she died during his junior year of high school, October 2015. He then lived with me and his sisters, Lily and Greta, until he graduated. They are 2 years and 5 years younger than him, respectively. He then moved into college at MidAmerica Nazarene University, where his mother and I met. He lived with us for a few months the following summer but has been on his own since then.

Wyatt has always been his own person, even from a young age. Very charismatic and likable. Not interested in sports, though he did participate in a few. Later, we found out he was just doing that because he felt we wanted him to. He made friends easily at the Harrisonville Christian School, where he attended from preschool through 8th grade. We would joke that the other kids would sometimes follow Wyatt's lead and not even realize they were doing it! He found his true joy and passion in the 6th grade, when we signed him up for Christian Youth Theater in Kansas City. He took several classes and participated in numerous musicals and plays for 3 years, until he started high school. He was an emotional kid, connecting to each cast he worked with, often crying when the show was over. He and I butted heads through his middle school years and the first couple years of high school. We are similar in personality and aptitude and sense of humor. He didn't like being told what to do—like any kid—and tended to prefer his mom over me during those years. All that being said, he and I went to Peru on a missions trip in 2010 and had some great times and bonding moments while there. Then again in 2012 with all of us. He felt like he needed to bring a bible to someone over there the second time we went and it was very important to him to find that person and give the bible to them. We still have the picture of him with that gentleman. Her death affected quite a bit, as you can imagine. She died suddenly from an aggressive colon cancer, only living 3 weeks after the initial diagnosis on 9/26/15. This didn't leave him or his sisters much time to process things before she was gone. He was already seeing a counselor at that time and continued seeing him to help with the grieving process and some depression symptoms he had been dealing with. In high school, he again made friends easily and became involved in show choir and theater. He was a loyal friend to those close to him. He was well-liked though he did have a tendency to be a little self-confident. He was in every musical during his years at high school, excelling in that area. He also became interested in raising chickens and pigs on our property during those years. At most we had 20+ chickens and 3 pigs at one time. He also was working for a local farmer, just doing odds and ends around his farm. He was a hard worker, putting in a lot of hours. Our relationship softened and grew closer during the

last two years of high school. We would often meet for lunch, when he could, just to talk and catch up since he was so busy. We still made time to go see movies or out to eat together. He was the student council president, show choir president, and drama club president his senior year, and he embraced all those roles! He always made sure that he could be depended on to do what was required of him. He felt a call to ministry his senior year of high school which is what led to him deciding on MidAmerica Nazarene Univ for his post high school education. Wyatt is gay, which we found out about his freshman year of high school. Having grown up in pretty conservative homes, this was hard for his mom and I to deal with and understand. It took some time but we loved on him as much as a teenage boy would allow. Mentally combining the idea of being gay and being a Christian called to ministry was difficult for him. When he left for college, he found some like-minded friends, also gay, who I think influenced him to just do whatever made him happy. Tasting this freedom opened up a whole new lifestyle for him, one that was difficult for his old dad to even attempt to convince him could have a downside. He ended up dropping out of college and working near the plaza for a while. He was a trusted worker at the store where he was employed, very good with customers, and very polite. He also started a small theater company with a couple other guys, and it was modestly successful, even during COVID. He and I continued to work on our relationship, getting together from time to time.

I won't pretend that there weren't some rough years in there. Just prior to dropping out of college, he attempted suicide, on the 3rd anniversary of his mother's death. He spent some time in an inpatient psychiatric facility after that. A year or two later, he planned another attempt and ended up calling 911 prior to following through. More time in a psychiatric facility. He was able to get help and make some changes, and that's when he started the theater company mentioned above.

Fast forward to now, with him being at Leavenworth. I got remarried 5 years ago and adopted her kids. So now, he has several new siblings, though he hasn't spent a lot of time with them. He still asks about them almost every time we talk. We are still communicating...through letters and phone calls and occasional emails, when available. I can hear and see a change in his attitude. He has apologized numerous times for how he behaved at times during high school and afterwards, particularly when he and I were not seeing eye to eye. He cares about his siblings and me, and often asks how we are handling things. Seems like he has more peace now. He knows he has created a lot of extra stress and trauma for us and seems to be genuinely sorry. He is particularly fond of his Mimi, my mother. She has been to visit him as many times as she can. I have had trouble getting the go ahead from Leavenworth, but am excited to see him again.

Wyatt is aware that life will be different when he is released from prison, however long that is. He knows he will be restricted severely and will have to deal with the mistakes he's made for a lifetime. I fully plan on continuing to communicate with him, and visit when I can. I can assist with finding him a place to stay and a job when he gets out. I plan on being a support for him, in whatever way I can. He will need it, and he's my son. I think he will continue to struggle with some depression, regardless of how well-adjusted he is after prison. I want to make sure he has someone to talk to and maybe go to appointments with, if needed. He has been through a lot, and has made some poor decisions, but I feel like he's on the upswing now.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I know you are busy, with a lot of cases and people to consider.

Sincerely,

Chris Maxwell



September 28, 2023

To the Honorable District Judge Roseann Ketchmark:

My name is AnnettaMarie Snowden. I am a 70-year-old lady who lives in Lee's Summit, Missouri with my husband, Gary, who is Associate Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lee's Summit. I am the mother of four wonderful men who are all grown and living on their own. My profession was education and I taught for a period that spanned 42 years. The last position I had was at Harrisonville High School.

I am writing to you about Wyatt Christopher Maxwell, who was a student of mine at Harrisonville High School. I worked with him both in and outside of the classroom. He was involved in the Theater Department taking theater classes and performing in the school plays and musicals. He also was part of the Speech and Debate team and represented the school at tournaments. Wyatt was on the student council, was the class president, worked as a technician for the Performing Arts Center, and was my teacher aide his senior year. In all these activities, I worked with Wyatt and was able to get to know him well.

Speaking to Wyatt's character, he is an honest young man who always tried to do the best in his endeavors. When students around him started doing activities that were questionable, he stayed on course. Wyatt is a very dependable man and I felt very comfortable having him in charge because I knew that he would steer the group to stay within the boundaries that were set. Wyatt is a mature man who spent about as much time with the adults in high school as with the students. He was well liked by all, including the secretaries, principals, teachers, coaches, custodial staff, lunch ladies, students, etc. I do not think there was anyone in the building that did not like and respect Wyatt.

Wyatt's faith is very important to him. He has always sought to develop peace with himself and others. He was raised in the Christian faith and has remained faithful to many of those principles. He has, recently, been investigating other faiths and has found some of those ideals that he has also put into practice in his life. I would say that he is a well-balanced man who does not like any conflict, does not purposefully tell untruths, and seeks to live a peaceful, loving life.

Life was not always great for Wyatt, and he has had difficulties in his life. Wyatt lost his mother to cancer in 2015, two months before I also lost my mother to cancer. I was able to help provide him with transportation to and from the hospital to visit his mother and I hope I was able to comfort him during his time of grief. He was able to comfort me during my time of grief. Soon afterwards, his father became involved with another woman, and she and her family became his dad's top priority. As I viewed the situation, I felt like Wyatt was not valued within the new family unit and his dad gradually pushed him away. Many believe that Wyatt was asked to leave because his father had never accepted his being a gay man. He went home from work one day and found boxes in his room. He was allowed to pack up the boxes and his father gave him \$20 for gasoline and told him to leave. My husband and I offered Wyatt a place to stay when this happened, but he chose to live with his Grandmother Mimi, who allowed him to come and live

with her. She is a very loving woman who cares greatly for Wyatt. I went over to visit with them while he was there and can attest that it was a very loving place for Wyatt. He would have stayed there longer, but his dad interfered and said that he should not be taking advantage of his grandmother's hospitality. Soon after, he found a place to live on his own.

During the time that Wyatt lived with his grandmother, I did volunteer work with him in a new theater adventure that he started. He and a friend were directing a show and I was involved in designing and constructing the set pieces. Although Wyatt missed his family, he was very involved in this new endeavor, and he seemed to be fulfilled. When the show was over, Wyatt was busy working and I found myself very busy with house foundation repairs and our times together became fewer. For a long time, we continued to talk with each other via cell phone.

I would like to offer help to Wyatt. If I was allowed to visit him, I would be there on a regular basis. If Wyatt were released, he could certainly live here in Lee's Summit with my husband and myself. We would offer him a place of refuge where he would be offered emotional, spiritual, and financial support. My family knows Wyatt well and they all would welcome him to live at our house and be a part of our family.

I would like to conclude by saying that I have never had a student who was more mature and courteous than Wyatt. The time he had with his mother and his grandmother molded him into the person he is today. You can trust him. Like I said earlier, Wyatt does not purposefully tell untruths. He is a young man who will make a difference in this world, given the opportunity.

Thank you very much in advance for reading my letter. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me:

AnnettaMarie Snowden
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816-510-6677
gamsnowden@gmail.com

Sincerely,



AnnettaMarie Snowden

Dear District Judge, Roseann Ketchmark,

My name is Greta Maxwell, and I am Wyatt Maxwell's little sister. I'm not sure if you grew up with siblings or older siblings for that matter, but growing up, I always knew that regardless of any teasing or tricking, Wyatt was there for ME. Wyatt is my oldest sibling, we are separated by a middle sister, also we aren't the closest in age, we are very much so the closest in personality. We are both silly, both have big hearts that feel big feelings, and both always want to believe the best in people.

Growing up, I got to watch Wyatt grow up too, he was the most energetic, creative and lighthearted kid anyone had ever met. Yes, he had his moments of annoying me and my older sister, but I think that comes with the role. I remember he was always finding a new way to create something, whether that be a pulley system to get snacks to his bed or a way to turn off the lights in his room with the pull of one string, there was always something going on in his creative brain. When our mom died when Wyatt was 16 and I was 11, things in our family changed drastically. No one really knew what to do or how to be a family without my mom at the center holding us all together. My siblings and I tried as hard as we could to cling to each other not always successful, but trying, nonetheless. Wyatt really struggled with losing our mom, I think because she was probably one of the few people in this world that really understood him, she knew his heart and knew how to love it well. However, even through his own personal struggles with the death of my mom he has remained a place for me to go when I am struggling or confused. He may not know all the right things to say, but he knows how to cry with me and be a shoulder for me to cry on.

Wyatt's smile brings a smile to everyone around him, even when it's not easy, he has always found a way to see the best in a situation. The only way I can think to even try to pay back the massive debt I owe to Wyatt for all he has done for me is to find the best ways to support him in this season and the many to come. I may be a lowly college student, struggling through my undergraduate, however the Lord has been gracious to me, and I know that if I had the opportunity, I would be able to give Wyatt a loving home (whether that be full of 20-year-old girls or not I can't promise) and food on the table. While we are able to talk now in small increments, I would love to have the ability to have coffee dates and lunch times with my big brother, I may not be the oldest or the wisest, but I sure do have a lot of love in my little heart. We miss Wyatt out here and can't wait to have him back. Thank you for your time in reading this letter and I hope it has found you well.

Sincerely,

Greta Maxwell

November 10, 2024

District Judge Roseann Ketchmark
C/O Gina Slack, Investigator
Federal Public Defender
1000 Walnut Street, Suite 600
Kansas City, MO 64106

Via email: Gina_Slack@fd.org

To the Honorable Judge Roseann Ketchmark,

My name is Cathy Wiens and I am the paternal aunt of Wyatt Christopher Maxwell. Wyatt is six months younger than my son and I have been part of his life since he was born. Wyatt was an active and good-natured child who played hard and was adventurous. He liked to play super hero, run, and climb trees, and generally liked to be busy. He showed musical talent from a young age and loved to sing in church. He was involved in church and school musicals and loved anything musical and theatre. This continued throughout his adolescence and early college years.

Wyatt was the kid who was kind and courteous to adults. He “visited” with the old people and was always caring. I always told him jokingly I was counting on him to take care of me in my old age as I was not sure any of other kids would take the job.

Wyatt’s mother died from cancer in 2015. I was with her and my brother when she passed and was the first person the three kids (Wyatt has two younger sisters) saw when we told them she had gone to heaven. Those moments of holding Wyatt and his sisters while we all cried is marked in my mind and heart for eternity. Our mother, Wyatt’s grandmother and Mimi (Charlotte Bearden), was also there and has been a mother as well as grandmother to him since his mother’s passing.

After his mother’s passing, Wyatt took the responsibility of being the oldest child seriously, maybe too seriously. He struggled with depression and anxiety and grieved the loss of his mother. However, despite this burden, he finished high school very successfully with excellent grades, many awards, and gave the senior speech at his graduation. He had many friends and seemed poised for a very successful college experience. His college years started off very well to our view—where he was involved in leadership and theatre activities and had plans to be a pastor. However, he began to struggle toward the end of his sophomore year and then had several years of challenging times including two suicide attempts and a diagnosis of bi-polar disorder. He ultimately took a break from college due to these difficulties. Never the less, he has managed several successful jobs during these years and keeps starting over and trying again when he has a loss or failure.

Since Wyatt has been in prison, he has managed his emotions and the trauma of this experience better than I think most would. He seems to have grown emotionally and intellectually. It seems he is doing what he can to keep his mind and body healthy. I am amazed at his ability to try to focus on the positive. I am not an authorized visitor but we have exchanged letters and I get updates from my mother (his

Mimi) every week when she visits. Wyatt is a very smart young man and I believe he can overcome this significant adversity he is now going through. He does need mental health support, including medications for depression and bi-polar. He seems to be realizing he is not invincible (a common belief of young men) and yet this realization does not seem to have taken his spirit. He seems to be in a place he is owning his own behavior and consequence and seems to genuinely want to make a positive difference in the lives around him; even in prison.

Wyatt will have my love and support as long as he is in prison and when he is out. I do not know what that support looks like once he is released, but I will be part of his life and part of his support system.

I trust this letter gives you a brief glimpse at the short, beautiful, and tragic life of my nephew, whom I love very much. His story is not over and I believe God can redeem any situation and I believe Wyatt can be a great and independent member of society again someday; hopefully soon.

Sincerely,

Cathy Wiens

Cathy Maxwell Wiens
2204 South Kenwood Street
Olathe, Kansas 66062
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I've known Wyatt since the end of 2019, so roughly 5 years ago now. We were connected by a mutual friend because they were seeking marketing help for a stage production the two were working on together. Right from the start I saw Wyatt's creative side, their passion for art and theatre. I began to form a little crush on Wyatt after our first couple of meetings, which led to us going on a few dates. This continued for a few weeks, until I decided to move to New York about a month later. It wasn't until after the pandemic began that I made my return to Kansas City - and from then on we decided to just remain friends.

From our very first interaction, I saw Wyatt as a kind, caring, empathetic, responsible and extremely thoughtful individual. They have always been someone who's there for their friends, community and siblings - Wyatt adores their sisters and speaks so highly of them. I know Wyatt would go above and beyond to make people feel seen and appreciated, whether it be family, neighbors, coworkers, or beyond. Not long after we met, they told me about their rough upbringing - losing their mom, getting kicked out of the house, their bouts of depression and suicidal ideation. This broke my heart, and the empathy in me wanted to be there as a shoulder to cry on, or a friend to uplift when things felt exceptionally difficult. Even through all that has happened, Wyatt seems to keep an optimistic outlook on life. They always look for the good in people, for the challenge to grow from, for the light in an endlessly dark time. I remember how much they loved (and probably still do) the song "The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow" from Annie. That's quite literally the way I've always known them to live their every day - with hope that the world will become a better, brighter place. Not only is Wyatt kind and optimistic, they are also a forward thinker - always talking about ways to improve life, both for themselves and others in their community. I remember them knowing their neighbors, the people who worked in nearby businesses, those involved in local organizations - their care and understanding of community was so unusual and impressive to see. These are all traits I genuinely admire in Wyatt as a person and know others can speak to the same.

At the end of the day, I care a lot about Wyatt and know they still have so much positivity and good and love to offer this world. It would be a shame to be solely defined by a mistake they made at such a young age.

I appreciate you for taking the time to listen.

Best,

Dalton Homolka

To: District Judge
Rosann Ketchmark

From: Jan Dorland

Re: Wyatt Maxwell

Date: August 29, 2023

I am a retired Canadian living in Puerto Vallarta, and I provide, as an unpaid volunteer, my services throughout the entertainment community as a Performance Coach, Writer and Director. I have been freely offering these services over the past six years at the two main theatres... Act2 and Incanto. My partner of 19 years, Rob Burton, works alongside me. We also volunteer extensively with RISE, the children's orphanage which holds a competition every year called "So You Think You Can Rise", modelled on "America's Got Talent". Rob serves as an administrator of the Fundraising Show, and I help Coach the contestants. It goes a long way to financing the Orphanage. Rob and I are also very involved with the charity "Friends of the Cuale" which is helping to restore the beautiful island in the middle of Vallarta which was destroyed recently by Hurricane Katrina.

I first met Wyatt Maxwell in May 2021 in Puerto Vallarta Mx. He had auditioned and was cast as a male lead in the long-running Act2 production of Mamma Mia. I was the Show Runner and Performance Coach for that production. When I first worked with Wyatt at Act2, although he had a history in Theatre, he was not very focused. However, he enthusiastically welcomed both my demanding coaching and the Director's notes and he ended up fitting well in the large cast. He is an excellent singer and the audience warmed to him immediately. He had good relationships with the company, including the Founding Director/Administer, Danny Mininni. In fact, Danny suggested to him that he should create his own cabaret show which would run several times a week.

This does not happen to many performers, I might add. They decided that the show should be called "Broadway Backwards" which was a reference to New York City cabaret shows in which male performers perform songs that were originally sung by women... but sung as men. Wyatt approached me to write and direct the show as I have extensive experience and knowledge of Broadway. We worked closely for several months and built a very successful and exciting show, based exclusively on Wyatt's albeit short life story, including very personal and not always complementary aspects. It created quite a buzz in Vallarta. Wyatt was on the cover of the major entertainment magazine here and was (deservedly) celebrated all over town.

He went on to perform at several of the leading cabaret spaces, often selling out. He was a popular, fun, exuberant, pleasing, and generous star. He also devised and initiated a successful Saturday and Sunday Brunch at one of the leading Hotels which had previously only focused on Dinner. That sell-out brunch, without him now, continues.

Wyatt was also readily available, on a volunteer basis, to work both with us and independently, helping many Charities and Events. He helped us immeasurably with technical support and featured performances for many events at our home and elsewhere. He also encouraged young neophyte

performers. He also, memorably, raised significant money for an elderly Mexican woman, a struggling artist, who sold her small paintings under the bridge on the Island. She was able, through his help and publicity, to raise money for urgent medical care for her family.

We knew of Wyatt's legal problems in the US, as did many other of his confidants. We knew (in fact I incorporated part of his story into the Broadway Backwards script I wrote) with his cruel abandonment by his father, the early death of his mother, and his struggles in university. But Wyatt always did his best to reject his "victimhood" and celebrate his daily life in Vallarta. He never sought charity for himself, even when others of his youth and disadvantage often will. He gave to the community. He was part of our community. I am sad he is no longer in our community. His absence is our loss.

Regards,

Jan O. Dorland and Robert J. Burton

Email: rob@bestdigs.com

October 1, 2024

Julie Aldrige-Luckan
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Email: kirksj412@gmail.com
Phone: 816-288-2051

The Honorable Roseann Ketchmark
United States District Judge
400 E. 9th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

RE: Character Reference for Wyatt Maxwell

Your Honor,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to respectfully ask for grace and leniency in the sentencing of Wyatt Maxwell, a young man whom I've known for many years and whose life and character I've witnessed firsthand.

Wyatt has always been an incredible big brother, son, grandson, and friend. During his high school years, I watched him flourish as a leader. As student body president at Harrisonville High School, he was admired by peers and teachers alike. He led worship at his local church, participated in show choir, and was a vital part of the school's thespian group. Wyatt's leadership and positive attitude were unwavering, even when faced with personal challenges.

Tragically, Wyatt's mother passed away from cancer while he was still young. Despite this heartbreaking loss, Wyatt remained a role model to other students, showing strength, resilience, and positivity in a time when many would have struggled to cope.

I also had the privilege of watching Wyatt as he transitioned into adulthood, where he courageously faced the struggles of finding acceptance as he came out as queer. His journey was far from easy, and despite being ostracized by some of the people closest to him, Wyatt continued to approach life with a smile and a hopeful outlook. His attempt to build a theater company in Kansas City was one of the many ways he sought to give back to his community, even as he faced setbacks.

While Wyatt's actions have led to his current legal troubles, I ask you to consider the full picture of who Wyatt is as a person. He is sweet, giving, and his smile has always had the ability to light up a room. Prison, I understand, is meant not only for punishment but also for rehabilitation. I believe Wyatt has been humbled by this experience and has learned significant lessons. Given the opportunity, I am confident that Wyatt will demonstrate that he remains a person of substance and value to society.

With this in mind, I humbly request that you consider granting Wyatt the minimum sentence allowed under the law. His life and potential extend far beyond the mistakes he has made, and I truly believe that the world will benefit from seeing Wyatt as a free individual once more.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Julie Aldridge-Luckan